Dear Parents, September 21, 2010

We hope that you and your child are having as great of a start to the school year as we are! We have so many exciting adventures in and outside the classroom planned for 6th grade this year and are looking forward to taking the education journey with your child.

As we begin to dig deep into our content of reading and social studies, we would like to take this opportunity to explain some of our goals for this school year. One of our philosophies of education is that as teachers, it is our job to teach students how to think. To start this process, in reading, we have introduced students to the term metacognition. We also call this listening to our “inner voice.” One of our Long Term Learning Targets (and supporting targets) for reading this year is:

I can be metacognitive (think about my own thinking) when using the reading comprehension strategies. This means I notice when text doesn’t make sense and use an appropriate fix up strategy.

I can make sense of what I read independently by intentionally using specific comprehension strategies.

I can listen to my “inner voice” and notice when text doesn’t make sense.

I can apply fix-up strategies to help me make sense of text when my comprehension breaks down.

Currently, Mrs. Gallegos and I keep a blog that chronicles our “inner voice”. Soon, we are going to introduce our students to our blog. After a few more weeks of modeling how Mrs. Gallegos and I respond to each other, we want students to begin to comment on our thinking and provide feedback to us. The purpose of this is twofold. We want students to continually see the metacognition of successful readers, so that they begin to pick up on strategies; and we want students to use the language with us so that they can eventually provide feedback to each other on their “inner voices”. Student to student feedback is crucial to building a collective understanding of content and skills.

Another goal we have is for students to create their own blogs journaling their metacognition of the books they are reading. There are several reasons why we feel keeping a blog will benefit students in our classroom. Blogs will allow us to give real time formative (use of assessment for the purpose of providing feedback to teachers and student over the course of instruction – used for teachers to make changes in instruction and students to see where they currently are) feedback to your child. This will allow us to better create learning environments in a timelier manner (as whole class and small groups). Blogs will give students the opportunity to see what other students are reading and perhaps find their “next book” to read from what other students are saying about their book. Additionally, responding to each other through blogging requires that students apply the skills, language, criteria and strategies that they are learning in class. As we read student blogs, and how they are responding to each other, we can determine how well students are applying their knowledge.

We are seeking your permission for your child to first become followers of our blogs. In order to do so, and to eventually post comments on our blogs, your child will need to create a Google email account (the blog site we use, blogger.com, is connected with Google). We will do this together as a class to ensure that students create accounts with the appropriate measures for privacy that Eagle County Schools require (we plan on working closely with the Director of Educational Technology for ECS, Kathryn Ferrel to accomplish this). Secondly, we are seeking your permission for students to create their own blog, again we will be doing this together, in class, to ensure we take the appropriate steps for privacy. Please know that we will have alternative ways for your child to receive and give feedback if your family decides that this is not an option you want to pursue.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email us at [noel.falk@eagleschools.net](mailto:noel.falk@eagleschools.net) and [stephanie.gallegos@eagleschools.net](mailto:stephanie.gallegos@eagleschools.net) or contact us at school at 328-2920.

Please also feel free to check out our reading blogs sites at:

falkradreading.blogspot.com

gallegosradreading.blogspot.com

Sincerely,

Noel Falk

Stephanie Gallegos

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I give my child permission to create a Google email account for the purpose of following Mrs. Falk’s and Mrs. Gallegos’ blog and eventually create their own blog.

\_\_\_\_ Please arrange an alternative way for my child to receive and give feedback on their inner voices. We do not want our child to be blogging at this time.

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(Parent Signature) (Student Name)